

who wear the uniform. It's such an honor to meet the troops who are wounded. And it's so uplifting to see their spirit, their drive to become rehabilitated, their love of their country, their support of the mission.

Laura and I spent time with the moms and dads and husbands and wives of those who are wounded, and I was struck by just the patriotic sense that they have and that—their strong support for their loved ones.

Every time I come to the hospital, one of the things I try to determine is to—whether or not our troops and their families are being treated with first-class care. It's very important for all of us involved in decisionmaking to know that a troop who had been injured in Iraq or Afghanistan is immediately brought to care. And to a person, they were very strong in their support and praise to how this hospital is run.

I want to thank the generals, the doctors, the nurses for running this hospital. I mean, it's—it's such a comforting sense for me to be able to tell a loved one, your person hurt, your loved one will get the best care possible.

And finally, we've got troops in harm's way in the Fallujah area right now, and our prayers are with the soldiers and their loved ones as they're doing the hard work necessary for a free Iraq to emerge. There are still terrorists there who are trying to stop the march of freedom. And at the request of the Allawi Government and alongside of Iraqi troops, coalition forces are now moving in to Fallujah to bring to justice those who are willing to kill the innocent and those who are trying to terrorize the Iraqi people and our coalition, those who want to stop democracy. And they're not going to succeed.

And so we wish our troops all the best and Godspeed to them as well. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:01 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## **Statement on the Resignation of Donald L. Evans as Secretary of Commerce**

*November 9, 2004*

Don Evans is one of my most trusted friends and advisers. He has been a valuable member of my economic team. Don has worked to advance economic security and prosperity for all Americans. He has worked steadfastly to make sure America continues to be the best place in the world to do business.

To encourage job creation here at home, Don has worked closely with me to reduce taxes, open markets for American goods and services, and promote a level playing field abroad.

Don shares my belief that the promise of America means our best days lie ahead. Together, we have worked to make that a reality.

I thank Don for his outstanding service to our Nation and wish him and Susie all the best as they return home to Texas.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also made available Secretary Evans' letter of resignation.

## **Statement on the Resignation of John Ashcroft as Attorney General**

*November 9, 2004*

John Ashcroft has worked tirelessly to help make our country safer. During his 4 years at the Department of Justice, John has transformed the Department to make combating terrorism the top priority, including making sure our law enforcement officials have the tools they need to disrupt and prevent attacks. In doing so, he has made sure that the rights of Americans are respected and protected.

I applaud his efforts to prevent crime, vigorously enforce our civil rights laws, crack down on corporate wrongdoing, protect the rights of victims and those with disabilities, reduce crimes committed with guns, and stop human trafficking. I appreciate his work to fight Internet pornography. I am grateful for

his advice on judicial nominations and his efforts to ensure that my judicial nominees receive fair hearings and timely votes.

John has served our Nation with honor, distinction, and integrity. I appreciate his service and wish him and Janet all the best.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also made available Attorney General Ashcroft's letter of resignation.

### **Proclamation 7844—Veterans Day, 2004**

*November 9, 2004*

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

Americans live in freedom because of our veterans' courage, dedication to duty, and love of country. On Veterans Day, we honor these brave men and women who have served in our Armed Forces and defended our Nation.

Across America, there are more than 25 million veterans. Their ranks include generations of citizens who have risked their lives while serving in military conflicts, including World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, and the war on terror. They have fought for the security of our country and the peace of the world. They have defended our founding ideals, protected the innocent, and liberated the oppressed from tyranny and terror. They have known the hardships and the fears and the tragic losses of war. Our veterans know that in the harshest hours of conflict they serve just and honorable purposes.

Through the years, our veterans have returned home from their duties to become active and responsible citizens in their communities, further contributing to the growth and development of our Nation. Their commitment to service inspires all Americans.

With respect for and in recognition of the contributions our service men and women have made to the cause of peace and freedom around the world, the Congress has provided (5 U.S.C. 6103(a)) that November 11 of each year shall be set aside as a legal public holiday to honor veterans.

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush,** President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim November 11, 2004, as Veterans Day and urge all Americans to observe November 7 through November 13, 2004, as National Veterans Awareness Week. I urge all Americans to recognize the valor and sacrifice of our veterans through ceremonies and prayers. I call upon Federal, State, and local officials to display the flag of the United States and to encourage and participate in patriotic activities in their communities. I invite civic and fraternal organizations, places of worship, schools, businesses, unions, and the media to support this national observance with commemorative expressions and programs.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this ninth day of November, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:46 a.m., November 10, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on November 12.

### **Proclamation 7845—World Freedom Day, 2004**

*November 9, 2004*

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

Fifteen years ago, the people of East and West Germany tore down the Berlin Wall, and freedom triumphed over Communism. The dismantling of the Berlin Wall reunited Germany and helped spread freedom across Central and Eastern Europe. With free elections and the spread of democratic values, these countries won their liberty, and their people became free. These democracies today contribute to a strong Europe, and the United States values their friendship and their partnership.

On World Freedom Day, we recognize all of those who fought for liberty and helped end the oppression of Central and Eastern